

## HABAKKUK

Rabbinical writers tell us that Habakkuk was from the tribe of Levi. We also know that he was contemporary with Nahum. Other than this we know almost nothing of his personal history. While Nahum's prophecy dealt with Assyria and the Northern Kingdom, Habakkuk focused on Chaldea and Judea.

It is important to remember that God punishes nations as well as people. In Genesis 15, for example, God warned Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years in a country that was not their own. Then God added: **“But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.” (Gen. 15:14).** The descendants of Abraham had to wait four hundred years, but the deliverance of Israel from slavery, and the judgment of God on Egypt did come to pass.

So, the Assyrians destroyed Israel (the Northern Kingdom), but Nahum predicted that God would someday “make an end of Nineveh”, the capital of Assyria (Nahum 1:8). It did happen!

Similarly, as the Chaldeans punished Judah, Habakkuk prophesied that God would someday punish the Chaldeans and their capital Babylon. Habakkuk chapter 2 lists 5 woes pronounced by God upon the Babylonians. A brief summary of their sins involves (1) Stolen goods (2) Unjust gain. (3) Bloodshed. (4) Giving drink to neighbors. (5) Idolatry. As always, God was telling the truth about everything. This included both the punishment of Judah and Babylon.

### THE PUNISHMENT OF JUDAH

Judah, as bad as it was, still was more righteous than the Babylonians. The people of Judah therefore found it difficult to believe that God would use wicked people like the Chaldeans to punish them. (Hab. 1:13). No one in Judah wanted to believe what God was about to do:

Habakkuk wrote: **“I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own” (Hab. 1:5, 6).**

The severity of their conquest would be like ravenous wolves at dusk and cruel vultures swooping to devour (Hab. 1:8).

This thought, as you know, was used by Paul to warn Jews in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. **“Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: ‘Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe even if someone told you’” (Acts 14:40, 41).**

While God is love, He is also a consuming fire (Heb. 11:29).

## THE PUNISHMENT OF BABYLON

Just as God promised to punish Egypt and Nineveh, he also promised to punish Babylon. Even though the punishment of Babylon would be in the future, it was so certain that the Lord commanded Habakkuk to write it so plainly on a tablet that someone running could read it. It is in this context that we are told that **“THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH” (Hab. 2:4)**

This passage is so significant that it is repeated three times in the New Testament Scriptures (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:28). One major aspect of this foundational verse involves faith in the future. Believers are sustained in their troubles by the confidence that even though we may be suffering now, God will someday punish those who oppress us.

Habakkuk was told that even though the punishment of Babylon would linger, it certainly would come (Hab. 2:2, 3). Believing this breathed new life into the children of God. This rock solid conviction would sustain them during their times of tribulation. The faithful ones should always be fully confident that what God had promised He was able also to perform (Rom. 4:21).

As we mentioned before, God promised Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and ill treated for 400 years in a country not their own (Gen. 15:13). Obviously, the Hebrew people could count. When 400 years had gone by, Amram and Jochebed gave birth to a goodly child and by faith they hid him for three months (Heb. 11:23). They were living by faith and were not afraid of the king’s commandment. They obviously believed that God was going to deliver them from slavery just as He had promised 400 years before. It seems that Moses was also convinced that God would use him in this regard. Remember! He killed an Egyptian believing that his own people would understand that God by his hand would rescue them. Unfortunately, they didn’t understand (Acts 7:25). What about us? Do we understand?

Job in the midst of his suffering manifested the same type of faith and said: **“Though He slay me et will I hope in Him” (Job. 13:15)**

Habakkuk also showed the same unwavering confidence and wrote:

**“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will still rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior” (Hab. 3:17, 18).**

## WHAT ABOUT YOU AND ME?

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that a man’s “work” will be tried by fire (1 Cor. 3:13). It seems that the “work” referred to in this passage is “people”.

Note:

- Paul told them “you are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9).
- Then he added that Jesus Christ is the only foundation for God’s building. Obviously we need to be careful how will build upon the Foundation of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 11).
- Some build upon this foundation with gold, silver, and costly stones. Others build with wood hay and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12).
- The fire will test the quality of every man’s “work” (1 Cor 3:13);
- If a man’s “work” survives he will receive a reward (1 Cor. 3:14).
- If a man’s “work” is burned up, he will still be saved but will suffer loss (1 Cor. 3:15).
- Then Paul repeated what he had stated in verse 9. **“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).**

Fortunately, the fire that destroys wood, hay, and stubble will purify gold and silver.

He sat by the fire of seven-fold heat,  
As He watched by the precious ore.  
And closer He bent with a searching gaze  
As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test  
And He wanted the finest gold,  
To mold as a crown for the King to wear,  
Set with gems of price untold.

So He laid our gold in the burning fire,  
Though we fain would have said Him, “Nay.”  
And He watched the dross that we had not seen,  
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright  
And our eyes were so dim with tears,  
As we saw the fire, not the Master’s hand,  
And questioned with anxious fear.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow,  
As it mirrored a Form above  
That bent o’er the fire, though unseen by us  
With a look of infinite love.

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart  
To cause a moment of pain?  
Ah, no, but He saw through the present cross  
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,  
With a love that is strong and sure,  
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat  
Than was needed to make it pure!

Author Unknown

This article was written by Boyce Mouton. No rights are reserved! It can be used in whole or in part for the glory of Christ and the advancement of His Kingdom.

For further studies link to [www.boycemouton.com](http://www.boycemouton.com)